18 April 2002

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Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 26
Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children

Special session of the General Assembly on children, 8 to 10 May 2002

Note on the round tables by the Office of the President of the General Assembly

I. Background

1. By its resolutions 55/276 of 22 June 2001, 56/222 of 24 December 2001 and 56/259 of 31 January 2002, the General Assembly decided that its special session on children would include three interactive round-table sessions, as follows:

Round table 1: Wednesday, 8 May 2002, from 3 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.

Round table 2: Thursday, 9 May 2002, from 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Round table 3: Friday, 10 May 2002, from 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

2. By its resolution 55/276, the General Assembly decided that the round tables would have as their overarching theme, "Renewal of commitment and future action for children in the next decade".

3. Pursuant to resolution 55/276, the Heads of State or Government of the following countries have been selected as co-chairs: Finland, Mexico, Mongolia, Romania and Zambia. In accordance with resolution 55/276, the sixth co-chair will be the President of the Republic of Korea.

4. After consultations with the Chairs of the five regional groups and with the delegations representing the six co-chairs of the round tables, the pairing of co-chairs has been confirmed as follows:

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Round table 1

Mr. Nambar Enkhbayar, Prime Minister of Mongolia
Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania

Round table 2

Ms. Tarja Halonen, President of Finland
Mr. Vicente Fox, President of Mexico

Round table 3

Mr. Kim Dae-jung, President of the Republic of Korea
Mr. Levy Mwanawasa, President of Zambia

5. A coordination mechanism channel has been put in place comprising the missions of the above-mentioned countries, the Office of the President of the General Assembly, the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee, the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) as substantive secretariat.

II. General recommendations and practical arrangements for the round tables

6. In preparing the round tables, these general recommendations for the practical arrangements and organizational aspects of the round tables will be considered as guidelines. These recommendations take into account the experience gained from round tables previously held by the General Assembly and are aimed at ensuring proper implementation of the above-mentioned resolutions.

7. It would be desirable to have a common understanding of the practical arrangements and division of tasks between the co-chairs. For this reason it is suggested that the co-chairs alternate in taking the lead in conducting the discussions. One of the co-chairs could open (opening remarks) the discussion and introduce the other co-chair, who would then make his opening remarks and introduce the child representatives. The other co-chair could close (closing remarks) the round-table discussion. The final decision on practical arrangements and division of tasks will be left to the co-chairs. Delegations of the countries of the co-chairs are advised to meet with the delegations of the countries of the two child delegates to finalize the organizational aspects of their respective round tables, the contents of which will be communicated to the secretary of the round tables and the Office of the President of the General Assembly in order to facilitate preparations for the round tables.

8. To allow for the maximum utilization of three hours for interaction per round table, the brief introductory and closing remarks of the co-chairs and child delegates should not exceed 30 minutes in total.

9. The report of the Secretary-General, "We the children", and the report of the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly on children should be the background documents for the discussions. The co-chairs may want to recommend to the participants of their round table that they use these reports as the basis for their contribution. In addition, to facilitate the discussion, the substantive secretariat (UNICEF) has been requested to provide a short summary of the above

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documents for participants in each round table. These notes would offer information on different aspects of the overarching theme as a reference for participants in preparing an interactive discussion at the round tables. The substantive secretariat (UNICEF) has provided the co-chairs with questions that may be used to stimulate discussion of the round tables.

10. As decided by the aforementioned General Assembly resolutions, each round table will start with an introductory address by two national child delegates. These statements should not exceed three minutes. As their role will be to kick off the debate, each child could be asked to focus on one of the following six themes from the outcome document, drawing from their own experience and the Children's Forum: (a) promoting healthy lives; (b) providing quality education; (c) protecting against exploitation/violence/abuse; (d) HIV/AIDS; and, as cross-cutting issues; (e) poverty and resource mobilization; and (f) partnerships. The co-chairs may wish to guide the discussion towards one or more of the above-mentioned main themes, without changing the overall focus of the round table.

11. The co-chairs could then open the floor to all participants. There will be no pre-established list of speakers. The round tables should be as interactive as possible. To that effect, written interventions are discouraged and participants are invited to address the overarching theme by making reference to interventions by previous speakers in the round table. Extended bilateral dialogue should be avoided. Given the limited time available, interventions should not exceed three minutes.

12. There will be one summary per round-table discussion prepared by the co-chairs and the summaries will be presented, in a manner to be agreed between the co-chairs, orally to the concluding plenary meeting of the special session.

13. The Secretariat will provide support to the co-chairs during the round tables and by assisting them in the preparation of their oral reports; support would also be provided, as required, to assist the co-chairs' press briefings after round tables 1 and 2.

III. Participation of child delegates in the round tables

14. With reference to paragraph 8 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 55/276 of 22 June 2001, in which the Assembly decided that two children would participate in each round table to present a brief introductory statement, the President of the General Assembly was requested to choose the child delegates, taking into account equitable gender and geographic representation. In the process of consultation with the co-chairpersons of each round table and Member States for the selection of six child delegates, the Office of the President of the General Assembly has taken into account the following detailed criteria:

- Geographical representation/languages;
- Gender balance;
- Under the age of 18 as of 19 September 2001 (balance within this age group, e.g. 11-14/15-17);

- The child should have been actively involved or participated in the preparatory process at national and/or regional/international level;
- The child may have experience or expertise on one of the topics of the special session;
- It would be an advantage if the child had previously demonstrated some confidence in addressing a formal meeting and a large audience.

15. After an extensive consultation with the co-chairpersons of each round table and Member States on the 20 candidates received from regional groups, the President of the General Assembly made a selection of six child delegates, whose names were duly transmitted to Member States on 7 September 2001. Subsequently, due to unforeseen circumstances and after further consultations, Bangladesh submitted the name of a new child delegate with similar qualifications as those described above.

16. Based on further consultation with the co-chairpersons of each round table and Member States regarding the allocation of two child delegates for each round table, and taking into consideration the same criteria as mentioned above, the President of the General Assembly would like to propose the final arrangements for participation of child delegates in the round tables as follows:

Round table 1

- Ms. Caroline Barebwoha, Uganda
- Mr. Te Kerei Moka, New Zealand

Round table 2

- Ms. Marie Claire Umuhoza, Rwanda
- Mr. Toukir Ahmed, Bangladesh

Round table 3

- Ms. Sara Mandic, Yugoslavia
- Mr. Ngenfap Yang, Suriname